

LOVES OF LANDRU, ARCH-VILLAIN OF FRANCE, CAME IN QUICK SUCCESSION ON HEELS OF HIS VICTIMS' HIDEOUS DEATHS

NERVELESS IN CRIME, BLUEBEARD COURTED AS HE PLANNED END

Ruthless in Brutality, Killer Would Slay Victim and Within Few Hours Be Making Love to Next Fascinated Woman, Deliberately Scheming to Get Her Fortune.

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THE STORY THUS FAR.

LANDRU's early life was devoted to petty swindling. Later he turned his attention to victimizing women, making love to them, getting control of their property and then killing them.

Mme. Cuchet was one of the first. Landru poisoned her and her son, Andre, in a villa rented with her money, then set up a furnace and burned the bodies. He then met Mme. Labord-Line, assuring her, just after the double murder, that he loved her devotedly.

Meanwhile the police investigated his activities at the villa, and he shrewdly played for time, going to Lyons and notifying them he would have to be gone a week or more. Meanwhile he made love to several other women, including Nina Langlois, to whom he wrote affectionately.

DURING the last days of Mme. Cuchet's life Landru had, through one of his matrimonial advertisements, got into touch with a young, good-looking war widow named Gabrielle Nadaud. Her husband, a lieutenant of chasseurs, had been killed at the front, leaving her in rather straitened circumstances, with a large apartment in the Avenue de Villier, which contained furniture worth several thousand francs.

On the second occasion they had met, Landru made pretense of violent love, and as they sat together—she having invited him to call—he caressed her, at the same time scheming with his devilish cunning how to possess himself of her property.

The young woman told him frankly of her position, whereupon he asked her to marry him, and she, after a little reflection, assented. The little widow, in her ignorance, regarded it as a romance of love at first sight.

"You should realize on your furniture," Landru suggested later that evening. "I sold my sister's furniture in the devastated area for four times its worth a month ago," he told her. "It would bring you in ready money. If you like to leave it in my hands, my dear Gabrielle, I will effect the sale for you without any delay."

The woman hesitated. She was loth to part with her home, yet she was badly in need of money.

Landru had already examined the household effects with critical eye.

"I could certainly get you ten thousand francs, because I know how to go about it," he went on. "You would, of course, have to make over the furniture to me—so that I could dispose of it and give a receipt for the money. That is, of course—" and he smiled as he fixed her with those peculiar magnetic eyes of his—"if you can trust me?" And with his arm around her he pressed her closely to him, and kissed her fondly upon the lips.

"I thank you very much, Monsieur Lucien," responded the victim. "I, of course, trust you."

The man who had attained such a degree of criminality never lost much time in preliminaries. He called upon her punctually at noon next day, whereupon poor Madame Nadaud—who, by the way, did not figure in the list of victims at the Assizes, and whose dealings with the Man of Mystery have only just been discovered—handed over to him all her furniture, it being understood that it should remain there until he could find a purchaser.

FEARED DETECTION.

He did not dare to take either Madame Nadaud or Madame Labord-Line out to Vernouillet at the moment, for the police would most certainly express surprise at the sudden change in his message. Hence he decided to postpone the end he had in view for both women. He had marked Madame Nadaud as a victim—later.

Being much in want of ready money, however, he wrote to a young woman named Nina Langlois, who lived in the Grenelle Quarter, and whom he had met in a cabaret in the Montmartre three weeks before. This girl, the daughter of a small farmer near St. Martin-des-Champs, about thirty kilometers from Paris, had, a few months before, been left a small income, and had come to visit Paris as guest of her married sister.

On the first night of their meeting Landru had discovered that her legacy of 4,300 francs was intact in a Paris bank, and on their second meeting he suggested that she should employ it in speculation. Then he had proceeded to

make violent love to her in his usual insidious but passionate way, and the poor girl, her head turned in her inexperience, believed that his affection was genuine.

On their third meeting she had rather resented his too amorous advances, therefore, the letter he wrote her—one which I have copied from the dossiers—was certainly an appeal so remarkable and so characteristic of the man's criminal mind that I here reproduce it.

He wrote:

FLATTERED HER.

"Little friend, whose prettiness is seen in every step and movement, whose eyes and smile have the right happiness, may I entertain the hope of being raised to the rank of a comrade without being accused of pretensions? A great friendship, a feeling deeper still, an affection, draws me to you and increases every day, when I recollect in your precious treasures of heart and mind—rare things, and, unfortunately, so little appreciated in these days. The thought of having made you unhappy tortures me. You alone can, by a word, give me back that calm and happiness by again permitting me to look into your limpid, clear, yet dreamy eyes, which haunt me day and night. Come to see me at the Rue des Petits Champs tomorrow at 3 o'clock and let us have another delightful talk. I cannot bear to be parted from you another single day, for I love you, my darling Nina—I love you with all my heart and with all my soul—Your own Raymond."

The buxom young girl, on receipt of this letter, sent her ardent lover a telegram, and at the hour appointed called at Landru's flat. He kissed her fondly upon the lips, stroked her hair, and acted in the manner of the perfect lover, so that she could do nothing else but believe in his deep devotion.

After half an hour he took her out in his car to Armonville, in the Bois, where, it being a warm afternoon, they had tea at fresco beneath the trees, and then drove back, arriving just at dusk.

When again in the well-furnished nest of love, Landru, with his sinister cunning, advanced a step further. He had told her of his wealth, of his chateau in the country, and his villa at Cannes, while she, on her part, had consented to become engaged to her bearded admirer, whom she found so ineffably charming. She was, therefore, not much surprised when, assuming a sudden gravity, he said:

"Your money is lying idle at the bank, my dearest. Why should that be so? I am a man of business, and if you will entrust your affairs in my hands, I will invest it so that it will bring you five or even ten times its amount within the next twelve months. To allow money to lie in banks is extremely silly in



Landru had a way of saving mementos of his victims. This picture shows police officials examining the contents of one of the Bluebeard's rooms. Note the quantity of women's false hair, the trinkets and letters on the table.

these days of such shortage of money."

"But I don't know anything of investments, or how to go about it," replied the half-ignorant country girl. "My sister and her husband urge me to keep it for safety in the bank."

"Quite natural—but they are not business folk," laughed Landru. "If all people kept their money deposited in banks then the business world would quickly be at a standstill. No! Money makes money—even though you loan it out on interest. You should really do that, my dearest little one. I merely advise you in your own interest, darling—as you know. Are we not to be married soon, and is not my object that my dear little wife shall have a comfortable income all her own? Would it not be more pleasant for you to be independent?"

"Certainly," laughed the good-looking girl, as she sat back in her soft armchair, much impressed by her lover's exquisite courtesy and his deep solicitude on her behalf.

"Then you had better give me an authorization to draw the money from the bank and invest it for you," replied the crafty scoundrel, who had already formed a scheme by which, while the money went into his pocket on the following day, no complaint or allegation would ever pass her lips.

REMEMBERED WARNING.

She again hesitated, recollecting the words of her sister and brother-in-law, but at last consented, whereupon he took out a sheet of stamped paper upon which he typed with a small portable typewriter, the necessary authorization, giving his own name as Raymond Lenoir and his address the Chateau des Grandes Vignes, at Frocourt, near Beauvais—an address, which, of course, was false.

He called in the bent old woman who came each day to do his housework, to act as witness, and a few minutes later the girl Langlois had assigned her money to him in a perfectly legal manner.

Landru was always precipitate in his actions as soon as he obtained the necessary document to enable him to deal with his victim's possessions. Only three weeks had elapsed since he had first met the girl, but already she had fallen his victim completely.

"I will do my utmost with the money to place it out to advantage," he told her, as, full of satisfaction, he lit a cigarette, and suggested that they should go to dinner at a small restaurant close to the Palais Royal.

Already his active brain had decided upon a grim and sinister plan. But it was then too early—only half-past seven.

So they dined together, and he made the doomed girl drink with her coffee a strong liqueur to which she was unaccustomed. The order she had given upon her bank was an authorization which he knew would not be questioned. Next day the money would be his. Hence he was in gleeful mood.

Even as he sat there sipping

his coffee and gazing into the innocent countenance of his good-looking victim, he wondered whether action that night would be to his advantage.

At last he decided that it would. Therefore, after idling at another cafe near until half-past nine, he conducted his fiancée back to his flat, where he produced a large box of expensive chocolates, and offered them to her. She took two, but he pressed upon her two more, and took one himself—though she did not see that he only made pretence of eating it, and carried it into the salle-a-manger, where he went to obtain his cigarette box.

CHATTED MERRILY.

"Till ten o'clock they sat together. Landru, though chatting merrily and all the time uttering words of deepest devotion, and from time to time kissing her, watched her narrowly, but, to his chagrin, he

high speed through the suburbs, and until they came to the old town of Pontoise, where, taking the left hand road which runs for miles along the bank of the Oise, he continued as far as the village of Beaumont.

There he left the main road, and taking a lonely byway which he knew ran between two rows of high poplars close to the river he suddenly pulled up on the hard road at a spot within a few feet of where the dark, swift waters ran deeply.

He switched off the head and rear lights, and waited. The inanimate girl was sleeping soundly at his side, her head pillowed upon his shoulder, for the impregnated chocolates had done their work, as they had done once before.

Having listened intently for five minutes or so, in order to satisfy himself that there was no one in the vicinity of that dark, desolate

switching on the lights, when suddenly two men sprang out of the darkness and commanded him to stop!

RUSHED AWAY FROM SCENE.

Landru's fearlessness and daring when cornered was one of his outstanding characteristics.

When challenged by the two men, he realized a sudden peril, whereupon he drove his car straight at them, causing them to jump aside, and continued his way. As he had no lights the men could not distinguish any number or the make of car.

Two kilometres further along, he came to the broad high-road again, and turning to the right, switched on his lights and drove straight back to Paris.

The men on their part, alarmed by the police, and search was made; but on the discovery of the girl's hat, coat and bag, the rural constable put it down to suicide, and believed that the motorist was merely passing by.

Next day search was made in the river, but not until four days later was the body of the poor girl, Nina Langlois, recovered.

But already Monsieur Raymond Lenoir, of the Chateau des Grandes Vignes, at Frocourt, had presented at the bank the girl's authority to draw her 4,300 francs, and had been paid. The police were greatly on the alert, but though they searched for many months, Monsieur Lenoir was never found—until quite recently—in the person of Henri Landru.

For that reason, the story I have just related, with others that I will later on disclose, was not presented by the prosecution at the trial.

Landru never let the grass grow beneath his feet. Madame Labord-Line was held in the hollow of his hand as an easy pigeon to be plucked whenever necessary. Therefore he turned his attention to a quarter which had been recently attracting him, and he laid a plot which, for callousness and deep cunning, it would be difficult to find a parallel in the criminal history of the world.

Only four days had elapsed since the cold-blooded murder of the farmer's daughter when, at 4 o'clock one afternoon, the man of mystery was changing his clothes in his small, but well-furnished bedroom in the Rue des Petits-Champs, the window of which looked down upon the narrow Paris street which, as you know, runs from the Rue de la Paix to the rear of the Palais Royal.

CAREFUL DRESSER.

He had put on a smart dark blue suit, brushed his beard carefully, and in his mirror satisfied himself of his appearance in which, as a perfect lover, he always took the greatest pride. While at Lyons he had written to Madame Labord-Line telling her that he must be absent for some time, the actual truth being that he had postponed the end he had in view for her because he deemed it highly dangerous for the moment to take any woman to Vernouillet. He intended to deal with her—later!

The young war-widow had, to his satisfaction, fallen an easy victim, hence he had decided upon a truly diabolical method of send-

HOW SUPERASSASSIN FOOLED THE POLICE

HENRI LANDRU, the world's greatest love criminal, carried on his terrible affairs for years with incredible boldness.

He despised the police and, as the reader will remember, cleverly duped them after the double killing of the Cuchets at Vernouillet.

He went boldly on snaring susceptible victims, securing their money, and then slaying them by poison and disposing of their bodies.

He kept his own counsel and appeared after each of his deeds openly in the streets of Paris, and dined at various cafes.

There was no one to tell tales about him and he went so far in the affair of Elise Laporte as to rent an apartment within sight of the police station.

His egotism and effrontery were so great, and he lied with such incredible readiness and so logically that he completely fooled all those who made inquiries about him.

His love affair with Elise Laporte, who had fifty thousand dollars in the bank, he pursued with his old bait, using the magic word "marriage." It was through her that the police again came to grips with him.

ing her to her grave. "As a matter of fact, he was about to try a new experiment, and with that object he had some time before procured from a drunken and disolute medical student—whose friendship he had for many weeks been cultivating with the sole object—a small hermetically-sealed tube.

This, after drawing the curtains and switching on the light, he took from its secret place of concealment—a small, well-disguised cavity behind the skirting board under the window—a cavity wherein reposed several small mysterious phials, a big revolver, a half-mask of black silk, and one or two steel implements, which were, in reality, an up-to-date burglar's kit, together with one or two relics which, if they ever fell into the hands of the police, must inevitably connect him with more than one mystery of Paris.

But their secret hiding place was most cunningly contrived, and would certainly escape even the most rigorous search.

Taking the little tube between his fingers, he held it up to the light, revealing it to be three-parts filled with a pale-yellow jelly-like substance.

He carried it into the cosy salle-a-manger—where the table was already laid for dinner for two, and placed it in a cup of hot water, which dissolved the jelly into a liquid. Then, tying a wet handkerchief across his mouth and nose and putting on a pair of gloves, he took a clean liqueur-glass, and breaking the tube, allowed the liquid to flow into the glass, instantly covering it with a piece of blotting paper, and carrying the fragments of broken tube to the burning stove, into which he carefully placed them for destruction.

FEARED OWN LIFE.

By his actions it was plain that the liquid, whatever it might be, was highly dangerous to human life, and that he himself was afraid of its effects.

On the buffet stood a platted basket containing a bunch of magnificent grapes, and also another containing half a dozen very fine Tangerine oranges, which he had bought in the boulevard an hour before.

Seating himself at the buffet, the handkerchief still across his face, and wearing his gloves, he took out a hypodermic syringe from his little case, and with it injected some drops of the mysterious fluid into each grape, sealing the puncture by means of a fine, camel-hair brush, dipped in some chemical substance. The grapes being all thus treated, he turned his attention to the oranges, in each of which he made six injections, carefully sealing them.

This work he accomplished in silence, with a demoniacal grin upon his sinister countenance.

Suddenly, as though by an after-thought, he took from a drawer a small piece of cotton-wool, and dipping it in the liqueur-glass, he rubbed it over the soup spoon set beside the table prepared for his visitor, watching it until it dried, leaving no trace.

Then, with a grunt of satisfaction, he carried to the stove the liqueur-glass, syringe, camel-hair brush, cotton-wool, and indeed everything he had used, including his gloves, placing them all in, and reclosing the round iron lid.

Afterwards he opened the window wide, to allow a current of air, and then, having removed the handkerchief from his mouth, he carefully washed both hands, also his face and beard, with carbolic soap.

Ten minutes later he went forth to one of his favourite haunts, an

obscure little cafe in the Rue du Mail, where he drank a "demi-blondie" and had a chat and a joke with Emilie, the thin, white-aproned waiter. Afterward he spent 10 francs on flowers, and returning, he decorated the table for the benefit of his victim.

Landru's pretended passion was for birds and flowers. He posed as a lover of nature, but at heart had no concern with it. His one and sole sordid object was money, and nothing prevented him from obtaining it—even the sacrifice of human life itself.

He held all women in supreme contempt and laughed at their sighs of love. His own kisses were, indeed, too often the seal of doom.

GAVE ORDERS TO COOK.

At 5:30 o'clock the old widow Amelot, who cooked for him and kept his rooms tidy, arrived, as she did each evening, carrying with her what she had bought for the evening meal.

"I have a lady coming to dinner," he told her. "It must be nice. I leave it to you to get some extras."

"Tres bien, m'sieur," replied the bent old dame, her head wrapped in a black woollen shawl, for her master had many lady friends at his love-nest, and she knew from experience how to provide for them. So she set to work and cooked quite a nice little dinner.

When the young war-widow arrived, she found a well-laid table for two, with spring flowers, spotless linen, and shining silver. Her newly-found friend welcomed her, and kissed her ardently as soon as the door was closed.

"Ah! my darling Gabrielle," he sighed. "This is indeed most delightful! We shall spend a happy evening together. After dinner we will go somewhere—to the new revue at the Casino de Paris—if you like. I hear it is excellent."

"No," replied the fascinated widow. "I would far rather spend the time here quietly with you to talk things over and arrange matters. Unless, of course, you want to go out—eh?"

"Your every wish, my dearest, is a command," was the scoundrel's gallant response, as he lit a cigarette and gazed at his victim through the blue, curling smoke.

They sat down to dinner—just clear soup, fish and an entree, as is served in every middle-class household in Paris. The young war-widow drank only water. Had she drunk wine, Landru's experiment would have been so much easier.

SEIZED WITH REMORSE.

They sat facing each other, and as she used that spoon to take her soup, the arch-fiend was seized with sudden remorse—but only for a few moments. He had set himself deliberately to kill her by such insidious and diabolical means that even he—the poisoner of Mme. Cuchet and her son Andre—now hesitated.

He knew quite well the consequences of taking soup with that spoon, and he also knew that she liked grapes. If she took any, then death was inevitable, death by means which could never be traced to his hand—causes that nobody in the world could charge him with having produced—for she would succumb to a natural and fatal malady.

Already the pretty young woman was doomed. She had taken her soup with the spoon which, with his devilish ingenuity, he had rendered deadly, and now no medical assistance would avail to save her from the disease. The furniture in her handsome flat would be his, for had she not already

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William Le Queux, the Famous Criminologist, at Landru's Death Cottage at Gambais, Running Down Clues of Some of His Murders.

saw that the chocolates had no effect upon her—as was his intention.

Therefore he pressed two more upon her, and after she had eaten them, he said:

"It is a glorious night my darling Nina. Let us have a motor run into the country. Afterwards I will take you back to your sister at Greelle."

The girl, now only half-conscious, consented, and, a quarter-of-an-hour later, he helped her into the sea. At his side, and they were soon speeding away across the Place de la Concorde, and out of the city.

The night was dark, the moon being hidden behind a bank of cloud, but Landru drove on at

spot, he roughly pulled off the girl's hat and took off her scarf and jacket. These, together with her handbag, he laid carefully upon the river bank in such a position that they could be seen by any passerby. His idea was to give the crime the appearance of suicide. Having slipped off his boots so that he should leave no footprints, he lifted the girl's unconscious form from the car. First, he placed her upon her feet upon the soft ground in order that her footprints might remain there. Then, carrying her to the bank, he calmly let her slide into the deep, fast-running water, without making the slightest sound.

He sprang into the car and had moved slowly along without